



Annual General Meeting

October 5, 2019

Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms

STRATEGIC PLAN – Framework

(Based on June 1, 2019 document)

Preamble:

Incorporated in 2012, the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms (CABF) is a faith-based, volunteer, non-profit society. It carries on the intents of its predecessor organization, the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship (organized 1971): to bear witness to the historic Baptist principles of freedom, and to continue involvement with non-Baptist communions in joint worship, social action and ecumenical discussions. Today, CABF has a membership base of individuals and churches in Nova Scotia and Ontario.

A legal Memorandum of Association sets out objectives describing what the Association is for. Here is the subset that is relevant for our planning purposes:

1. To witness to the freedom implicit in the voluntary principle in religion, which is a fundamental tenet of our historic identity.
2. To affirm and celebrate Baptist participation in, and witness to, the whole visible, Catholic and Evangelical Church of Jesus Christ.
3. To promote peace and understanding amongst people of all faiths.
4. To provide a forum for the discussion of doctrinal and ethical questions and social issues and policies in that spirit of tolerance and mutual respect which issues from Christian love.
5. To bear witness to these objectives with and among Baptists regionally, as well as nationally and internationally.
6. To provide accreditation for clergy and chaplains.
7. To associate and co-operate with other like-minded organizations, such as but not limited to the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC); The Gathering of Baptists, Canadian Baptists Ministries and the Alliance of Baptists.

Vision:

Baptists freely seeking, living, sharing and celebrating justice, peace and love under the lordship of Christ.

Mission:

We encourage and support churches, pastors, and other individuals to understand and affirm Baptist freedoms as they express their faith.

Values:

The CABF stands within the Baptist experience of Christianity which has affirmed certain distinctives often expressed in “shorthand” as the Lordship of Christ, the Authority (Sufficiency) of the Scriptures, Soul Liberty, the Priesthood of All Believers, Regenerate Church Membership, the Autonomy of the Local Church, the Separation of Church and State and the observance of two ordinances (sacraments), Believer’s Baptism (usually by immersion) and Holy Communion. (For a Canadian reflection on these distinctives see Gordon Warren’s *Basic Baptist Beliefs* (<https://www.c-abf.ca/images/Documents/Misc/Warren Baptist Beliefs.pdf>))

Flowing through these “distinctives” is the theme of freedom, or the voluntary principle in religion. CABF values and emphasizes these freedoms, expressed below as an adaptation of Walter B. Shurden’s *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*.

Soul Freedom which leads to the **priesthood of all believers**, affirms the freedom and responsibility of every person to relate to God and one another without the imposition of creed, or control by clergy or the government or other authoritative body.

Church Freedom (or **the autonomy of the local church**) is the historic belief that local churches are free, under the Lordship of Jesus, to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, to ordain whomever they perceive to be gifted for ministry, and to participate in the larger Body of Christ (other churches and other denominations).

Religious Freedom is the historic Baptist affirmation of freedom **OF** religion, freedom **FOR** religion, and freedom **FROM** religion. Churches and individuals should be free to worship and serve in whatever manner they choose and with whomever they choose, guided by the Holy Spirit. All people, no matter their religious background, should be free from any coercion to worship and free from the intervention of the state in matters of religion.

Bible Freedom is the historic Baptist affirmation or belief that the Bible, interpreted under the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, must be central in the life of the individual and the church. Christians, with the best and most scholarly tools of inquiry, are both free and responsible to study the Scripture and act in accordance with its guidance.

Strategic Priorities	Key Initiatives
1. Proclaiming what we know about the Freedoms.	1.1. TELLING OUR STORY
2. Convening for the purposes of fellowship and growth in the freedoms.	2.1. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS
3. Supporting one another as we live out the meaning of the Freedoms.	3.1. ACCREDITATION 3.2. ACCESS TO PENSION & BENEFITS 3.3. CLERGY RECRUITMENT 3.4. JOINT EFFORTS/ASSOCIATING/NETWORKING

**MOTION: that we adopt the Strategic Framework as presented in this document.
PASSED**